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SHORTCOMINGS HIDDEN BEHIND AVERAGE DRILLING STATISTICS IN ONE DRILLING OFFICE OF THE USSR PETROLEUM INDUSTRY

The Tuymazaburneft' Trust, one of the largest in the petroleum industry of Bashkiria, fulfilled the 1952 plan ahead of schedule. Office No 1 of this trust drilled more than 5,000 meters above the yearly plan. In addition, Office No 1 developed a number of noted drilling foremen in the field of rapid turbodrilling. For example, in 1952 Usov's brigade attained a record drilling speed for the eastern petroleum regions. In the drilling of deep Devonian oil well No 692, this brigade attained a drilling speed of 1,408 meters per machine-month, as compared with the plan figure of 650 meters.

The accomplishments of Office No 1, as a whole, are not a matter of dispute. However, these accomplishments would have been even more substantial if all the sectors of the office had worked at a highly productive and even pace. Only 10 of the 24 drilling brigades fulfilled their plan assignments and performed drilling above the plan. Moreover, only three of these ten brigades made good their yearly socialist pledges. Thus, the poor performances of many brigades were hidden behind the average statistics reflecting the successes of a few brigades.

Early last year a letter from several well-known drilling foremen was published. This letter proposed the initiation of an all-Union competition to accomplish the overfulfillment of the yearly plan, the attainment of rapid drilling rates, savings in chemical reagents, and a reduction in the cost of drilling. Included in the letter were the pledges of drilling foreman S. S. Sidorenko and others from Drilling Office No 1. Sidorenko pledged to drill 9,000 meters instead of 6,300 meters, the plan figure, during 1952. If we consider that all the drilling in this office is accomplished by the highly productive turbodrilling method and under forced drilling systems, then it is clear that the pledges taken by the drillers were completely realistic.

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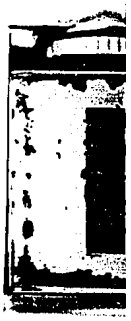

Why then, in such a situation, did the majority of brigades fail to fulfill their pledges? It was due principally to the fact that the directors of the drilling office and the trade union committee did not establish the necessary conditions for work at maximum capacity and for full utilization of the remarkable technical ability which the Tuymazy drillers possessed.

Let us take Sidorenko's brigade as an example. During the year, it drilled 6,500 meters instead of 9,000 meters, the figure pledged. At almost every well, the brigade fulfilled with dispatch all work connected with drilling. Then the drillers sat idle while awaiting a new assignment; or else they were not used in their correct capacity, that is, in testing work or in work on wells which had been drilled previously.

At present the situation is no better. The enterprise appears to be in a poor position to fulfill this year's assignments. However, the trade union committee of the office and its chairman, Krutas', still are not exerting themselves to interfere in production affairs.

Drilling Office No 1 of the Tuymazaburneft' Trust has been competing with drillers of the Buzovny Drilling Office for a long time. However, the Tuymazy drillers are reminded of this only once a year, at which time a telegram proposing the continuation of the competition is sent to Baku. In addition, the Tuymazy drillers compete with drillers of the Bavlyneft' Trust of the Tatneft' Association, located only an hour away by bus. Here again, the competition exists only on paper.

A comparatively small number of brigades, i.e., those performing well, figure in the reports of Drilling Office No 1 showing the results of competition. The remaining brigades are not heard of for years on end.

Innovators have arrived at concrete methods for the lessening of idle time and the better utilization of technology. Regrettably, the results of their valuable experience are not being made available to others by the trade union committee and the directors of the office.

Drillers often have reported on the necessity of placing preliminary and finishing-up work on oil wells on a piecework basis. However, no one has taken action on these suggestions. Consequently, up to now a strange situation has prevailed. During the drilling of an oil well, a brigade is materially interested in hastening work. However, as soon as drilling is completed and the commercial speed of drilling computed, then the prorated payment system is ended. Payment for finishing-up work and preliminary work on drilling jobs is computed on a straight time basis. Consequently, there has been no incentive for hastening the work.

If prorated payments had been awarded for these jobs, then the transfer time from one drilling job to another would have been shortened by up to 48 hours. This means that in the past year it would have been possible to drill an additional 3,600 meters, or, in other words, to bring in two Devonian oil wells above the plan.

Another shortcoming has been the failure to install water gauges at the drilling locations. The enterprise directors and the trade union organization have procrastinated and have not demanded the accomplishement of this measure. As a result, a loss of about 500,000 rubles was incurred during 1952.

For several years, Balasanyants, director of Drilling Office No 1, has not wished to carry out a provision of a collective agreement envisioning the assembly of a testing stand in the turbine shop. As a result, after

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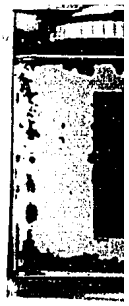

undergoing repair, turbodrills have been delivered to the sectors without having been tested. After the turbodrill is lowered to the face of the oil well, defects are discovered. Four or five hours are spent in lowering and lifting the defective turbodrill, and if there is no spare drill, operations are delayed for a greater length of time.

During the second half of 1952, Yevstigneyev and Salov, technical engineering workers, and the brigades headed by Usov and Alekseyev adopted a new drilling system, wherein the washing of almost the entire shaft of the well was accomplished with water instead of clay solution. As a result, the commercial drilling speed was raised by 22 percent and the mechanical drilling speed by 40 percent. The expenditure of clay and scarce chemical reagents was reduced to one fourth the previous amount. It has been estimated that the use of water in place of clay solution in drilling could save the Tuymazaburneft' Trust more than 17 million rubles per year.

However, even this remarkable innovation is being introduced extremely slowly. Most brigades know of this innovation only as a result of hearsay. Stakhanovite schools for the propagation of progressive experience exist only on paper.

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